

Gumnut Gazette

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Superb fairy wrens

What in the wren?

Have you ever seen a little blue bird flitting around your garden or local park? It was probably a Superb fairy wren!

Male Superb fairy wrens are hard to miss with their bright blue cap, ear tufts and cheeks. Which explains a common name they are given: the blue wren. Females, however, are brown all over (but we still think they're just as lovely)!

Superb fairy wrens are found throughout south-eastern Australia. They make their homes



Male + Female breeding pair
Frank Hemmings, Centennial Parklands

in eucalypt woodland forests, in the thick shrubs and bushes close to the ground. They have also adapted to urban parks and gardens, which is why you might see some around your home.

We have a few groups of Superb fairy wrens at Cleland Wildlife Park. Keep reading to find out more!

Acknowledgement to country

The Department for Environment and Water acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters we live and work upon and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection

and the relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country.

The Department works in partnership with the First Peoples of South Australia and supports their Nations to take a leading role in caring for their Country.

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FUN FACT

All members of the wren family help to feed and look after the young, not just the female (mum)!



Fun and games

Find the fairy wren!

Find-a-Word



V	K	C	I	H	C	B	E	A	K	R	N	L	P
C	S	U	P	E	R	B	I	W	B	L	U	E	E
D	M	T	U	N	W	O	R	B	A	R	B	N	S
U	K	G	N	A	U	I	S	C	P	R	E	N	I
K	U	G	N	C	M	S	S	E	K	R	T	U	N
G	R	E	A	S	U	R	U	L	A	M	Y	T	S
U	U	W	E	N	E	W	H	Y	R	I	A	F	E
W	E	R	C	W	N	E	G	A	M	U	L	P	C
R	A	Y	Y	H	F	A	K	N	M	R	N	B	T
E	I	C	A	U	T	E	R	N	B	E	I	I	I
N	F	W	N	S	G	A	I	B	U	R	N	R	V
C	R	N	E	G	C	E	G	C	D	S	A	S	O
T	W	N	U	U	N	Y	M	A	U	I	A	C	R
I	R	B	S	G	L	G	C	R	E	R	N	N	E

BLUE
INSECTIVORE
MALURUS
CYANEUS
BROWN
BIRD
NEST

FAIRY
PLUMAGE
WREN
CHICK
SUPERB
EGG
BEAK

JUMBLE WORD

RUBESP

IYRAF

NREW

Did you know?

Superb fairy wrens are only about 14cm tall and weigh between 8-13 grams.

QUIZ

What colour does a male Superb fairy wren have on his head?

- A. Pink
- B. Blue
- C. Yellow

Maze credit: doyoumaze.com

Life in the egg

Safety and Secret Codes



Female Superb fairy wren in nest and Eggs in nest
Photo credit: flindersblogs + Graeme Chapman

Life for a Superb fairy wren begins as an egg in the nest. Fairy wrens' nests are dome shaped and made from loosely woven soft, dry grasses and spider webs. Inside it is lined with feathers, fine soft grass and sometimes even fur.

Fairy wrens build their nests in thick grass or shrubs, less than a metre up from the ground. This helps them to hide away and keep safe from predators.

There are usually lay about 3-4 eggs. The eggs are white but have markings on the end with light reddish-brown splotches. It usually takes 14 days for chicks to hatch out of their eggs.

Breeding season for fairy wrens is September to January, which is when you'll see the colourful blue wrens!

MAZE

Help! The fairy wren is stuck in the middle.
Show him the way out...

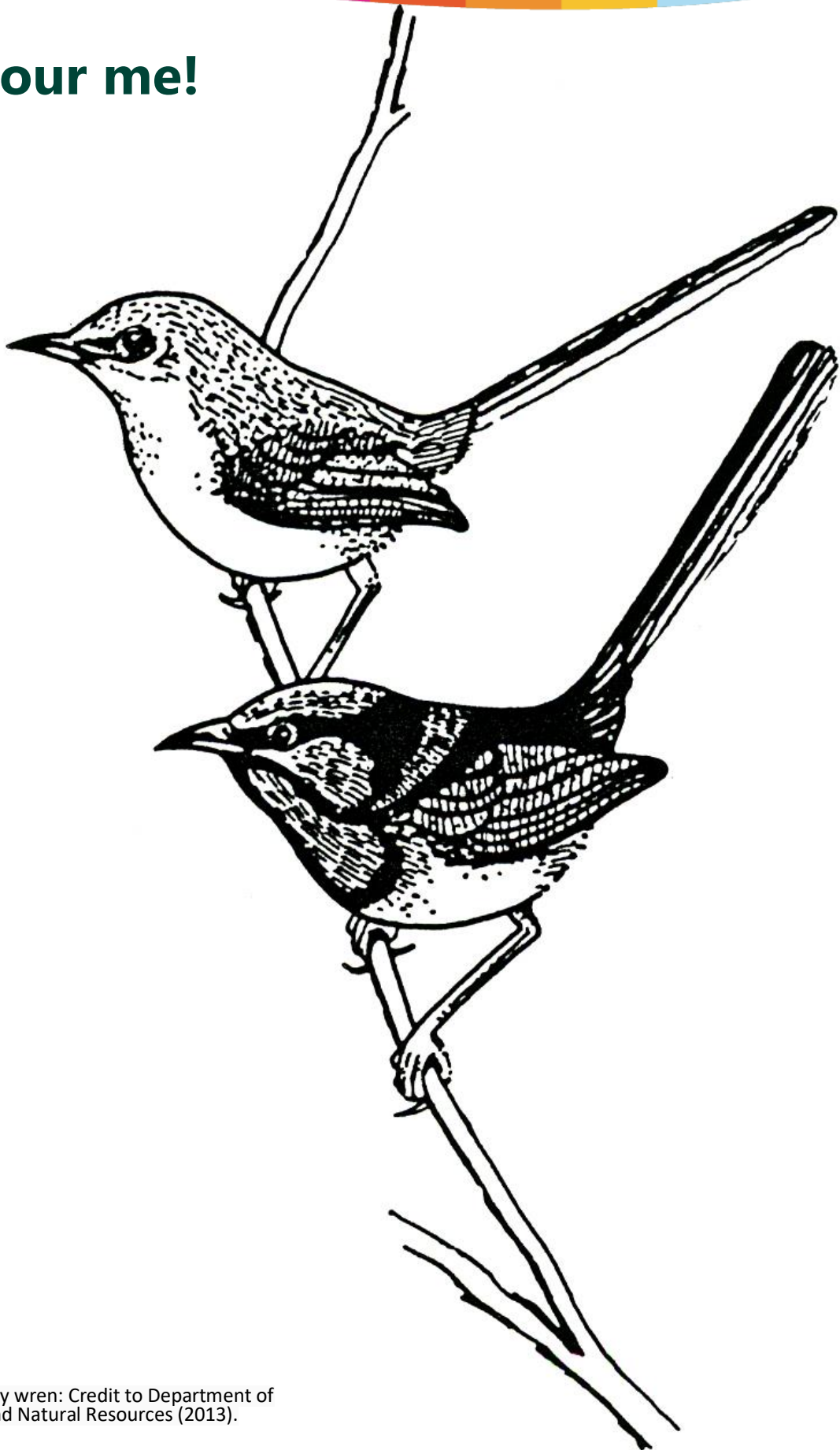


Fun Fact!

Superb fairy wrens each have their own "incubation call", which means that the parents sing a special note to their unborn chicks in the egg, just like a secret password! This helps other wrens to know who is or isn't their babies.



Colour me!



Drawing of Superb fairy wren: Credit to Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (2013).

What a Pair!

Social little birds...

Where there's one wren, you'll usually find two!

During breeding season (September to January), Superb fairy wrens will be found in pairs or small "co-operative breeding" groups made up of a main breeding pair and some sons and daughters from previous broods. The female wren builds the nest, lays the eggs and then both the parents and younger wrens all look after to hatch and raise the chicks.

For the rest of the year in the autumn and winter months, you can find wrens in much larger groups made up of many different breeding families. Then they all split back up into their original family groups when breeding season rolls around again.



Superb fairy wren pair
Credit: about-animals-planet.blogspot.com

Did you know?

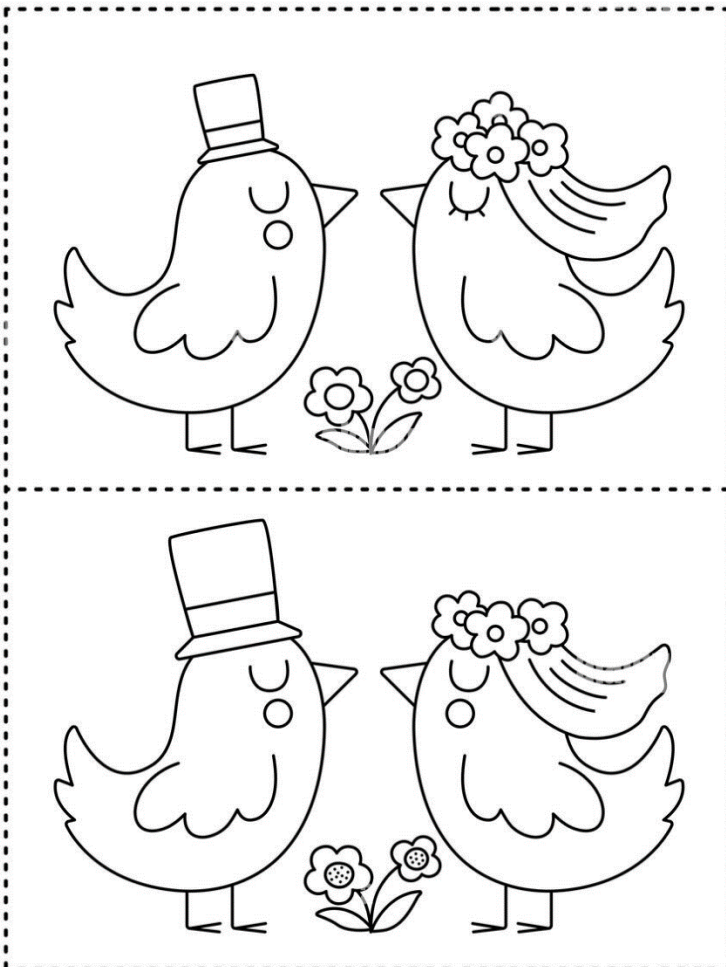
The combined breeding groups of wrens are called "supergroups", and they do this to have a larger territory to find food in winter and provide more protection from predators.

Spot the Difference!

Can you find the 5 differences?

FUN FACT:

Male fairy wrens will pluck yellow petals from different flowers and show them off to female wrens to get their attention during breeding season. The yellow colour is a good contrast to their striking blue feathers!



Spot the Difference by Lexi Claus, Alamy Stock Vector

Did you know?

Superb fairy wrens' bond for life but they mate with many different individuals.

Helpful to our Environment...

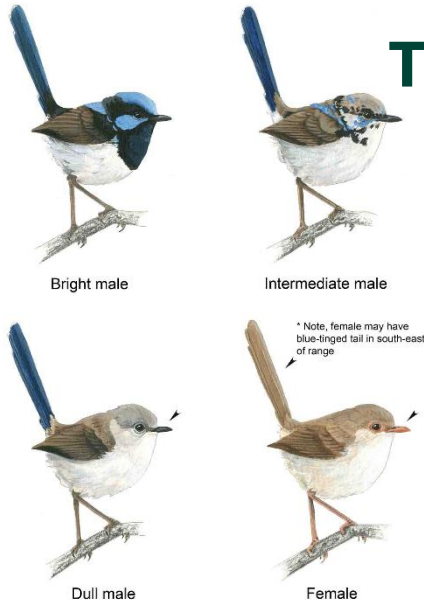
Not only do Superb fairy wrens add colour and singing to your garden, these birds are also good for the environment too!

They help our ecosystem through pollination of native plants, weed and insect control, and natural recycling and seed spreading.

Be kind to the environment and the animals we share it with.

Did you know?

The Superb fairy wren won "Bird of the Year" in 2021!



Superb fairy wren
Credit: Allison Johnson

The colour of wrens

How can you tell the difference between a male and a female Superb fairy wren?

Their plumage and their beaks of course!

- **Males** have bright blue feathers and a black beak.
- **Females** have brown feathers, red around their eyes and a red beak.
- **Juvenile males** (non-breeding males) are usually all brown with some splotchy blue feathers and a black beak.

All Superb fairy wrens communicate to each other with songs and calls, and they wag their tails to say "hi" - just like humans waving at each other!

Informational Facts

Common Name: Superb fairy wren or also known as "blue wren"

Scientific Name: *Malurus Cyaneus*

Lifespan: 5-6 years

Height: 14cm tall

Weight: 8-13 grams

Wingspan: up to 12cm wide

Habitat: dense low cover areas such as thick shrubs and bushes in eucalypt woodland forests. Can be found in Adelaide and Kangaroo Island, through to Tasmania, Victoria, NSW and lower Queensland.

Diet: Insectivore- Eats ants, grasshoppers, shield bugs, flies, weevils, and various larvae, but also small amounts of seeds, flowers, and fruit

Threats: carnivorous birds: magpie, kookaburra, currawong, crow, raven. Introduced species: cat, dog, fox. As well as habitat destruction and land clearing.



Bird of the Year 2021
Credit: Patrick Kavanagh